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by

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**Tracing the Manifestation of Samuel Huntington's "Clash of
Civilizations" Theory in the Telenovela *El Clon***

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Dedication

To all those in my family who have supported me, I am forever grateful for your contributions.

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Abstract

Tracing the Manifestation of Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" Theory in the Telenovela *El Clon*

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Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory generated substantial discussion in academic and popular circles after being published in the early 1990's. Despite being heavily critiqued and rebutted in the academic world, his ideas have proven more pervasive in general discourse. One of the areas where this idea remains resilient is television. In this paper, I explore how Huntington's idea of conflict between different cultures manifests in the plot of the 2001 Spanish version of the Latin American telenovela *El Clon*. Through an analysis of the both the main character and some supporting characters, I trace the continuity of Huntington's ideas of cultural conflict through selected scenes in introductory, middle and concluding episodes as the show's protagonists attempt to navigate their problems. Additionally, I examine the reception of these ideas through the lens of certain Arab stakeholders and the general viewing audience. Through this portrayal, an understanding of how the show's conflicts seem to reflect Huntington's perspective will be demonstrated.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory has generated much discussion since it was first promulgated in the early 1990's. At the time, political scientists and academics were attempting to foreshadow the shape of future relations between peoples of different places around the world. However, the ideas that Huntington advocated for in the years after the Cold War leading up to 9/11 would, to some degree, end up setting the tone in both academia and policy discourse for the general public's perceptions that would initially develop about certain areas of the world. In particular, Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory became one of the key baselines for future academic discourse relating to the Middle East, and the subsequent pushback his controversial ideas received. Unfortunately, academia's pushback against Huntington largely failed to influence more popular discourse. One influential example of the presence of Huntington's theory in popular discourse is the Brazilian television show *O Clon*, or its Spanish version titled *El Clon*. This television program, created by Gloria Perez and aired in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 on the screens of millions in Latin America and around the world, contains an inordinate amount of material and imagery that reflects Huntington's conceptions about the Middle East. This material includes scenes in which characters in the show are told that their lifestyle decisions such as clothing styles and dating choices are not conducive to Islamic culture. They are told that these choices are forbidden in Islam, and that major Western elements of their characters will have to be dropped in order to live a more proper Islamic cultural existence. I will demonstrate that conflicts over these issues reflect Huntington's general assertions about the incompatibility of Western and Islamic civilizations.

First, I will undertake a brief literature review that will provide understanding of Huntington's ideas and will set up the context necessary for the main

purpose of this essay, which is to demonstrate these idea's continuity in *El Clon*. In order to achieve this goal, I will then provide a comprehensive analysis of selected scenes from the initial, middle, and concluding episodes of the show. This analysis will be conducted through the perspective of the show's main protagonist Jade and through other significant main characters that are important to the progression of the overall plot. I will then be able to show how the reflection of Huntington's themes influences character decision making throughout important scenes in each episode. Then, I will examine the show's reception among different Arab stakeholders, both in Brazil and Morocco, as well as some general audience curiosities regarding Islamic cultural practices in the show, in order to provide some understanding as to the differing reactions to Middle Eastern themes and imagery in relation to *El Clon*'s status as one of the most popular telenovelas ever produced.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

When Huntington originally published his theory of the clash of civilizations in the magazine *Foreign Affairs* during the summer of 1993, the content of his suppositions succeeded in gaining significant attention. In this essay, he moved to identify the source that he saw as most likely to spark significant conflict in the future. He wrote, "It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among mankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural."¹ In stating this opinion, he sought to rebuke those who suggested that the conflicts of the future would remain ideological, such as the Cold War struggle between democracy and communism that had effectively ended in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Instead, Huntington advocated his theory as the centerpiece of the international arena. He writes, "The Clash of Civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will dominate the future."² This cultural divide between civilizations has major implications for the Middle East, as Huntington points to what he sees as a general incompatibility of the Middle East with Western values, stating, "People in the Arab World do not share the general suppositions of the Western World. Their primary attachment is to their religion, not to their nation-state. Their culture is inhospitable to certain liberal ideas, like pluralism, individualism, and democracy."³ In his view, adherence to religion comes, above all else, at the expense of the Western ideas, such as the three aforementioned concepts in the previous sentence. This depiction of a narrow and rigid viewpoint that

¹ Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations>

² "Ibid."

³ "Ibid."

serves as the basis for Huntington's theory would generate two significant consequences. First, this depiction would reverberate across academic circles and spawn harsh critiques from other intellectual thinkers who took issue with the construction of his argument. Prominent figures from varied academic disciplines, such as David Brooks and Edward Said, have offered their contrarian opinions to Huntington's theory. Second, Huntington's ideas would take hold in more popular discourse. For example, IP Felix notes in his essay, "To What Extent Does the Clash of Civilizations prevail in the discourse of cartoon crises after 9/11? Using a Mimetic Approach," that "key media outlets have increasingly referred to the thesis after the 9/11 terrorist attack and made the conflicts between the West and Islam, stereotyped as the West's radical other, a primary subject of it."⁴ The timing of this shift is extremely close to the premiering of *El Clon*, and this change's importance stems from the fact that it led to the creation of material for media consumption that was consistent with Huntington's viewpoint. This trend, as I will later show, is reflected in the content of the television program *El Clon*.

Huntington's controversial ideas led to him having many detractors, each registering his or her own criticisms at different points in time. *Foreign Affairs*, the same outlet where Huntington published his essay, also published a set of response pieces that documents some of the immediate reactions and criticisms that he received from the academic world. One of these detractors is Fouad Ajami, a Lebanese born professor teaching in the United States, who wrote extensively about Middle Eastern issues. In the *Foreign Affairs* response reader, "The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate," he expresses his disappointment with the manner that Huntington chose to frame his environment. He

⁴ Felix, IP. "To What Extent Does the Clash of Civilizations Prevail in the Media Discourse of Cartoon Crises after 9/11? Using the Mimetic Approach." *University of Went Student Theses Repository Home*, 2015, essay.utwente.nl/68762/1/Felix_BA_BMS.pdf. (1)

notes, “From one of the most influential and brilliant students of the state and its national interest, there now comes an essay that misses the slyness of states, the unsentimental and cold-blooded nature of so much of what they do as they pick their way through chaos.”⁵ In this manner, Ajami states his disappointment that even with his extensive background in statecraft, Huntington fails to account for this in his essay, instead choosing to make a much more simplistic argument. Ajami sees the role of states as primary in the development of civilizations and believes that they control civilizations completely. He declares, “But let us be clear: civilizations do not control states, states control civilizations.”⁶ These criticisms show Ajami’s opinion that Huntington missed important nuances about the role of the state in his essay.

In her own response to Huntington’s essay, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, a professor of government at Georgetown University, offers a pair of her own criticisms about civilizations. She muses, “Huntington’s classification of civilizations is questionable.... If civilization is defined by common objective elements such as language history, religion, customs and institutions... Why distinguish Latin American from Western civilization?”⁷ It is clear in this case that she finds the way in which Huntington has categorized cultures to be problematic. Additionally, while noting, “important social, cultural, and political differences exist between Muslim and Judeo-Christian civilizations,”⁸ she believes that the most important issues facing Muslim societies do not cross international borders. Rather, she declares, “the most important and explosive differences involving Muslims are found within the Muslim world-between persons,

⁵ The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate. Council on Foreign Relations Press, September/October 1993 (2-3)

⁶ “Ibid.” (9)

⁷ “Ibid.” (22)

⁸ “Ibid.” (23)

parties and governments who are reasonably moderate, non-expansionist and nonviolent and those who are anti-Modern and anti-Western, extremely ignorant, expansionist and violent.”⁹ Her belief essentially negates the nature of the inter-civilizational clash and instead points to an intra-civilizational one, rendering Huntington’s arguments largely moot.

Critiques of Huntington’s theory also came in the early 2000’s, as the dynamic of 9/11 served to once again bring his essay to the forefront of the minds of academics and the public. The work, “The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy,” offers renewed rebuttals to his ideas in a dramatically different international landscape. In it, Roy Mottahedeh, a professor of History at Harvard University, discusses the reason for the renewed level of popularity of Huntington’s theory. He states, “Huntington’s theory is arresting because it offers a broad picture of world events that seem to be supported by a wealth of examples.”¹⁰ However, Mottahedeh notes that appearances of the Islamic world are not always what they seem after a closer and more in-depth analysis. Mottahedeh laments, “Yet for an Islamicist, a scholar whose primary interest touches in some way on the Islamic world, some of the examples taken from the Islamic world are far more ambiguous than they first appear, and counterexamples seem abundantly to hand.”¹¹ Specifically, he notes two glaring problems with Huntington’s assertions. First, “Not only is the empirical basis of the thesis a matter of dispute, but the theoretical structure proposed to explain the relation between culture and political behavior seems to the present author very much open to question.”¹² In short, Mottahedeh

⁹ “Ibid.” (23)

¹⁰ Qureshi, Emran, and Michael Anthony. Sells. *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*. Oxford University Press, 2005. (132)

¹¹ “Ibid.” (132)

¹² “Ibid.” (132-133)

identifies a problem with Huntington's classification of culture that is present in other critiques of the previous decade, such as those of Jeanne Kirkpatrick.

Edward Said, an author who wrote a very well known and respected book titled *Orientalism*, also found significant issues in Huntington's theory. Similar to other academics, he fundamentally disagreed with the Huntington's methodology. In an article titled "The Clash of Ignorance," Said doubles down on the flawed notions of Huntington's analysis, claiming, "Huntington is an idealist, someone who wants to make civilizations and identities into what they are not; shut-down, sealed-off entities that have been purged of the myriad currents and countercurrents that animate human history."¹³ In this manner, Said claims that the basis for Huntington's theory is not based on any real evidence, but instead involves manipulated abstractions of the makeup of the world.

David Brooks, a conservative and cultural commentator who contributes to the *New York Times*, wrote a piece in 2011 revisiting Huntington's ideas two years shy of what would be the 20th anniversary of the essay's initial publication. In this article, Brooks identifies with hindsight three important errors regarding the assumptions Huntington made in his theory. Firstly, he believes Huntington committed an attribution error; essentially "he ascribed traits to qualities that are actually determined by context."¹⁴ This means he viewed the entire region of the Middle East as a homogenous entity, failing to recognize that each country had its own context wherein conceptions of culture were formed. Second, Brooks opines that Huntington also committed an error in the realm of the cultural, stating that, "He was wrong in the way that he defined culture. He minimized the power of universal political values and exaggerated the influence of

¹³ "Said, Edward. "The Clash of Ignorance." *The Nation*, October 22, 2001.

<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/clash-ignorance/>

¹⁴ Brooks, David. "Huntington's Clash Revisited." *New York Times* (New York, NY), March 3, 2011.

distinct cultural values.”¹⁵ This fails to take into account the pervasiveness and global nature of some political beliefs. Finally, Huntington made a fundamental mischaracterization in the realm of the historical. Brooks claims that he misunderstood “the nature of the historical change. In the book, he describes transformations that move along linear, projectable trajectories. But that’s not how things work in times of tumult.”¹⁶ Overall, the repeated mistake that Huntington makes in the promulgation of his theory, according to Brooks, is that “all people share certain aspirations and that history is wide open. The tumult of events can transform the traits and qualities that seemed, even to great experts, sketched into stone.”¹⁷ Brooks sees fundamental flaws in several of the pillars that make up Huntington’s theory. These are based on what he believes is a fundamental failure to see the true makeup of the world.

A relatively recent critique comes from Emma Ashford’s article, “What We Get Wrong About The Clash of Civilizations.” This critique, written in the inaugural months of the Trump administration in 2017, expresses disagreement with Huntington’s worldview and connects what she sees as an alarming acceptance of the premise of his ideas among some members of the Trump administration. She writes that until today, “no administration has come close to embracing a Huntingtonian view of the world; both the Bush and Obama administrations rejected it.”¹⁸ However, Ashford links policy decisions to what she sees as an alarming change in the status quo. She states, “Many of the new president’s advisors appear to endorse a Huntingtonian view of the world, an impression confirmed by the Administration’s earliest acts, executive orders which seek to reduce

¹⁵ “Ibid.”

¹⁶ “Ibid.”

¹⁷ “Ibid.”

¹⁸ Ashford, Emma. “What We Got Wrong About The Clash of Civilizations.” *Cato Bound*, February 6, 2017.

Muslim immigration and build a wall on the southern border.”¹⁹ Furthermore, Ashford’s overall criticism of Huntington’s worldview further reinforces the problematic nature of the Trump Administration’s early viewpoints. She states, “There is a key reason why prior administrations rejected Huntington’s worldview: it provides a remarkably poor guide to a complex world.”²⁰ This oversimplification is identical to that of David Brooks. This assumption, according to Ashford, can be traced back to Huntington’s supposition that “Western-style modernization is, in effect, the only game in town.”²¹ The criticisms advanced by both Brooks and Ashford unmask Huntington’s attempts to create a simplistic version of world affairs that fit the theory he was attempting to advocate.

Overall, all of these detractors to the “Clash of Civilizations” theory cite a flawed analysis of world reality in their rebuttals to Huntington’s arguments, with Huntington failing to account for the gaping holes in his assertions. However, as briefly mentioned above, IP Felix identified in his essay a resurgence of discussion of Huntington’s theory in popular culture that has important implications for the reception and perception of *El Clon*. Additionally, Felix is not the only scholar to have written about the return of the “Clash of Civilizations” in the media, especially in the aftermath of 9/11. Ervand Abrahamian, in his work, “The US Media, Huntington and 9/11”, observes how the mainstream media in the USA “automatically, implicitly and unanimously adopted Huntington’s paradigm to explain September 11.”²² Indeed, the evidence for this widespread acceptance in US media is highly apparent. Abrahamian

¹⁹ “Ibid.”

²⁰ “Ibid.”

²¹ “Ibid.”

²² Ervand Abrahamian (2003) The US media, Huntington and September 11, Third World Quarterly, 24:3, DOI: 10.1080/0143659032000084456 (529)

notes, “the media framed the whole crisis within the context of Islam, and of Western civilization threatened by the other.”²³ He notes that even the liberal *New York Times*, where David Brooks would give his rebuttal of Huntington’s ideas in the next decade, “adopted this framework, and then tried every so often to distinguish between the good and the bad Muslims, between the correct and incorrect interpretations of Islam, and between peaceful and violent understandings of the Koran.”²⁴ The implications of this acceptance reverberated both in the United States and internationally. Abrahamian describes backlash against Muslims as considerable. He notes some of these atrocities. “In addition to verbal and physical assaults, discrimination at work, and of course special scrutiny at airports, over 1200 Muslims were imprisoned without officially being charged.”²⁵ He also describes the free reign Huntington’s supporters had in the media. Specifically, Bernard Lewis, a prominent Huntington supporter, was prominent in the realm of public discourse. Abrahamian notes, “If Bernard Lewis failed to cite Huntington by name it was because of intellectual property rights, not because of intellectual differences.”²⁶ Despite all of this information being related to U.S. media, it still has important implications for the Latin American region and for the progression of the plot of *El Clon*. The status of the United States as a world leader on many issues means that the country, and by extension the U.S. media, wields important powers to influence and shape the international discourse in regions where it has historically maintained close relations. Later, empirical evidence will be shown to demonstrate that U.S. events were part of the consideration for *El Clon*’s development.

²³ “Ibid.” (531)

²⁴ “Ibid.” (531)

²⁵ “Ibid.” (539)

²⁶ “Ibid.” (541)

Chapter 3: *El Clon* Analysis

The television show that serves as the basis for this analysis, originally made in Brazil in 2001 and titled *O Clon* was dubbed into Spanish in October of the very same year. With the new title *El Clon*, it gained a high level of popularity in Latin America. It began airing in the midst of an important world event. In an interview with the newspaper *La Prensa*, show creator and writer Perez talks about her show's beginning stages. She states that when *El Clon* "began to air in Brazil the first of October 2001, I had already prepared thirty episodes. I was writing it when the events of September 11 occurred."²⁷ This shows that while she was already fully immersed into the process of writing the episodes, the content remained open to the influences and consequences of the aftermath of 9/11. In fact, Brazilian telenovelas are famous for being open to modifying their plots in response to events and to audience feedback.²⁸ This is why the show, despite having the title of *El Clon*, ended up focusing more on its portrayals of Middle Eastern culture. Audiences made it clear that particular topic was more compelling, and Perez responded appropriately. Furthermore, Perez actively admits to a change in her own attitude regarding content of the show after 9/11. According to Evelyn Al-Sultany and Ella Shohat in their work, "Between the Middle East and the Americas: The Cultural Politics of Diaspora", Gloria Perez and the director Jayme Monjardim "indicated that although they did not alter the script after 9/11, the event did generate a newfound sense of responsibility to differentiate Islam from terrorism."²⁹ Part of this responsibility included "immersing herself in research, visiting the Middle East

²⁷ La Prensa, Webmaster. "La Mujer Detrás De El Clon" [The Woman Behind The Clone]. La Prensa. Last modified September 23, 2003. Accessed December 1, 2019.
<https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2003/09/23/suplemento/nosotras/1752838-la-mujer-detras-de-el-clon>.

²⁸ Straubhaar, Joseph, and John Sinclair. Latin American Television Industries. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

²⁹ Al-Sultany, Evelyn Azeeza, and Ella Habiba Shohat. Between the Middle East and the Americas: the Cultural Politics of Diaspora. The University of Michigan Press, 2013.(22)

and North Africa to study Muslim rituals of marriage and birth, for example, while Muslim clerics conducted workshops attended by the director and cast prior to filming.”³⁰ However, the authors also note that despite Perez and Monjardim’s efforts, “the telenovela elicited a heated international debate on websites with conflicting responses, deriving, we would suggest, from the contradictions within the narrative itself, which simultaneously exploits Orientalist topics while also celebrating Arab culture.”³¹ Such a reaction suggests that despite Perez’s efforts, something went wrong.

The show itself, according to IMDB, spanned more than 200 episodes, even though it only aired for roughly eight months, because the show aired for 5-6 nights a week.³² I will focus my analysis of *El Clon* with selected scenes from the first four and the last five episodes of the show, excepting the 248th. In addition, scenes from episodes 25, 55, and 81 will also be included. The inclusion of programs that were made at the beginning, middle, and end parts of the show will allow for comparison of the prevalence and the application of scenes consistent with Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” theory through the progression of the plot.

The show *El Clon*, tells the story of Jade, an Arab Brazilian who moves to Morocco to live with her religious uncle after the untimely death of her mother. Having spent the entirety of her life in Brazil prior to her mother’s death, Jade struggles to adapt and conform to the Islamic lifestyle imposed on her by her pious uncle Ali. Later, the show depicts her new life in Morocco along with the life of her cousin Latifa, the

³⁰ “Ibid.” (22-23)

³¹ “Ibid.” (23)

³² Amazon. “El Clon” [The Clone]. IMDB. Accessed December 1, 2019.
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0289800/fullcredits>.

Brazilian boy she falls in love with, Lucas, and other associated characters, as they navigate the conflicts arising around love, religion, ethics and culture.

In the opening episode of the show, the viewer is introduced to Jade and her mother as well as other important characters. However, the introductory episode is striking in the sense that the viewer is immediately exposed to the supposed incompatibility of Jade, as a Muslim woman, with mainstream Brazilian culture. Within the first five minutes, Jade's otherness commences with the arrival of her friends to the front of her residence in Rio de Janeiro. One of them is celebrating her birthday party at a nightclub and after encountering Jade's mother, informs her about their desire to invite Jade to the party. Unfortunately, her mother promptly discards the possibility. She states emphatically, "Jade cannot go to the nightclub. Our religion doesn't permit it."³³ Her mother, dressed in traditional Islamic clothing, then goes into the house. Jade, who is watching from a window above, confronts her mother and bewails what she sees as an unfair life. Jade claims, "I can't do anything. I can't study or sleep over in anyone's house or go to anyone's parties."³⁴ However, Jade's mother is dismissive of her concerns, expressing confidence in her decision-making and the clarity of their religion. "Nightclubs are places of drinking and luxury. They are weird and it's a sin."³⁵ It is in this manner the show debuts a conflict of belief systems conducive to Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" analysis. This scene demonstrates the conflict between two diametrically portrayed cultures. Jade is being raised according to the values of her single mother,³⁶ which simply do not conform to the environment in which she lives or the

³³ "El Clon Capítulo 1." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019. (5:42)

³⁴ "Ibid." (6:06)

³⁵ "Ibid." (7:09)

³⁶ The show makes no mention of her father.

attitudes of her peers. Despite her desire to be more “Brazilian”, her religion, according to her mother, does not permit it. For this reason, she feels isolated and will continue to feel isolated as the show’s plot progresses.

This pattern is reinforced through the first episode as viewers continue to familiarize themselves with Jade’s character. Immediately after this discussion with her mother, Jade’s mother gives her permission to enjoy some fresh air at the beach. However, this scene only reinforces Jade’s anguished feelings of isolation and separation as she walks in the sand, literally surrounded by people, but at the same time, completely separated from them and living in a different world. This emotion is painted on her face, as the camera pans from her facial expressions of both longing and sadness to images of Brazilian couples kissing and otherwise enjoying their time together. The conclusion of this scene even shows a Brazilian man looking at Jade with obvious interest, but Jade can only turn away in regret over what she cannot have.³⁷ If her mother will not sanction Jade spending time with her Brazilian friends, there is no way in which she could even contemplate having a Brazilian boyfriend. She remains trapped in the Islamic traditions of her family, despite the attempts of Brazilian people to project their culture onto her.

However, the first episode also contains important moments of plot development that lead to significantly changed implications for Jade’s future life. In the wake of the death of her mother, she is forced to move to Morocco to live with her uncle Ali. When she arrives in Morocco, the Brazilian nature of her habits immediately rises to the surface, despite her now deceased mother’s previous guidance. She disembarks from the plane and walks into the reception area of the airport. There, her family greets her. However, both her cousin Latifa and her uncle Ali’s middle-aged maid Soraide are

³⁷ “El Clon Capítulo 1.” Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019. (7:55-8:21)

wearing more conservative local dress. The stark difference between her two Moroccan family members, who are wearing hijabs and shifts that cover the entirety of their bodies, can easily be contrasted by what Jade is wearing. In this scene, Jade sports a blouse and jeans. The show draws the viewer's attention to the somewhat revealing nature of her clothing. When they reach their car and begin to drive to their destination, Jade's cousin Latifa begins to tell her about her upcoming engagement. However, Soraide interjects into the conversation, asking, "Will Jade appear in front of them wearing that clothing?"³⁸ When Jade asks what is wrong with her clothing and her cousin attempts to dismiss her questions, remarking that she only needs to wear something that covers more of her body, it demonstrates that Jade's clothing preferences are incompatible with the formal situations she is likely to encounter in her new home. It is already clear that she doesn't fit properly into the world she is entering. Jade's inappropriate attire continues to be problematic in this episode. It again becomes an issue of concern when Jade is separated from her relatives due to crowded Moroccan streets. She is harangued by a group of Moroccan women dressed in niqabs who are unhappy with her clothing style. At this moment, her family finds her and is able to rescue her. When Jade asks what the problem was, Soraide remarks, "It's because you're walking around with your arms uncovered."³⁹ She promptly gives Jade a strip of clothing to cover her arms and this small crisis is quickly resolved. However, these two scenes focused on Jade's clothing are only a foretelling of the incompatibility of her lifestyle and habits with the Islamic traditions portrayed in this television program.

In the second episode of this television series, the viewer begins to be exposed to the main plot point that defines Jade's character arc through the entirety of the

³⁸ "Ibid." (23:04)

³⁹ "Ibid." (30:44)

series. Jade's cultural conflicts with her uncle are a main pillar of the show's development in the introductory episodes. The majority of these conflicts are centered around the different backgrounds of Jade, a Brazilian-Arab whose upbringing in Brazil could ostensibly be considered a form of Western culture, and Ali, a conservative, religious Muslim man living in the Moroccan city of Fes. The continued disputes that arise between them both in this episode and in subsequent episodes lend further credence to Huntington's anticipation of a "Clash of Civilizations." An analysis of these scenes will confirm the bitter nature of these clashes.

This new dynamic begins with the fateful wardrobe choice that Jade makes for the engagement party of her cousin. She decides to wear the outfit of a belly dancer, donning only a green bra as a top and green belly dancing pants. The outfit reveals the vast majority of the skin on her belly.⁴⁰ Her uncle disapproves strongly of Jade's decision to dance around in that outfit, but on top of that initial displeasure, she, without meaning to, allows herself to be seen by Lucas, a stranger who happens to come to Brazil, and who was wandering around the neighborhood. In the moment when Jade and Lucas make eye contact, it is clear they become infatuated with each other. Nevertheless, when Jade's uncle Ali learns what has happened, he becomes livid. In a following scene, he commands her, "Get dressed and cover yourself, you dirty woman."⁴¹ Then he employs violence, slapping her in the face as an emphatic conclusion to his brief tirade. This reaction further cements the cultural divide that exists between Jade and her uncle. In addition, the show suggests her uncle's views are anathema to what is considered to be normal behavior in Brazil. The scene depicts Ali to be a stubborn, rigid,

⁴⁰ "El Clon Capítulo 2." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019. (10:27)

⁴¹ "Ibid." (14:38)

conservative man of the Muslim faith who employs violent means in order to control the women under his household authority. For the first time, the audience begins to see the difference in what is considered culturally permissible in Morocco and Brazil as Ali and Jade have their first cultural clash.

The first impressions the audiences are given of Ali regarding his reaction to Jade's perceived transgressions are reinforced in a subsequent scene where Jade and Ali discuss these events' details further. Ali's statements in this conversation only serve to strengthen an audience perception of the Islamic religion's contemptuous treatment of women and the consequences they face when they commit transgressions that are out of line with the expectations of males who are in charge of their well being. Ali remarks to Jade in this discussion, "You entered into my house to bring shame? I should cut out your eyes! Do you want to convert yourself into fuel for hell?"⁴² The cultural differences between the place of Jade's upbringing and her uncle are evident. While this extreme-sounding statement may be more commonplace in Arabic, its connotation in Spanish might appear overly harsh to people from that culture. Combined with Ali's reaction, viewers unfamiliar with everyday Arabic idioms will likely miss the cultural subtext. They only see that in Ali's eyes, Jade's actions are completely out of step with the reality of the place she now lives. To Jade, the sense that things have truly changed for her is beginning to sink in; for as after her uncle commands her to come to his study for further talks, she begins to cry. This moment is overwhelming for Jade, but from this point onward, she begins to receive instruction on how to rectify her incompatible behavior and avoid cultural conflict in her new environment. This comes immediately after Ali's departure from the room. Soraide and Latifa, who had been standing in the corner

⁴² "Ibid." (15:16)

watching the aforementioned scene unfold in horror, begin to help Jade to understand the cultural norms she is expected to follow. They counsel Jade to be completely submissive. The advice she receives from them is as follows, “Whatever he says, don’t respond. Don’t confront him. Lower your head. Accept all of it in silence. We will fix things in another way.”⁴³ Jade is highly discouraged from openly expressing her own viewpoints to Ali. The norm in this portrayal of Islamic culture is for the women to be obedient to the male relatives in their households on the surface while trying to fix problems in a less confrontational manner.

Even more telling is Soraide’s assessment of cultural norms in Brazil versus those of Morocco. She tells Jade, “The customs here are very different. Things in Brazil are normal. Here, they consider them a sin.”⁴⁴ This statement further reinforces the notion of clashing cultures and suggests two important things about Soraide’s opinions. First, she believes that normal cultural practices are in Brazil, not Morocco. Secondly, the shape of this particular belief of hers suggests that she agrees with Jade’s complaints, but seeing as they live in Morocco, there is no ability to find a middle ground. Furthermore, this scene expands the dynamic of a cultural clash, implicitly suggesting that Muslim women are prisoners of the faith, secretly longing to ascribe themselves to a more Western outlook but unable to realize that, due to an oppressive cultural system. Nevertheless, Uncle Ali will more forcefully facilitate Jade’s process of cultural adaptation.

Later in the episode, Ali officially begins his didactic phase. With strict and unwavering expectations, he explains to Jade the punishments that he is going to impose on her, according to his interpretation of the Islamic faith. The first part of his

⁴³ “Ibid.” (16:06)

⁴⁴ “Ibid.” (16:47)

lecture consists of a more informed explanation of where Jade went wrong. To be precise, Ali says, “Dancing isn’t bad. It’s bad to conduct yourself like an exhibitionist. It’s a great sin.”⁴⁵ Afterwards, he informs Jade of what could be considered the most literal interpretation of the punishment she ought to receive for her exhibitionist dancing. Ali claims that according to the Koran, “any woman who sins from lust will be locked in her house until death finds her,”⁴⁶ even though there is no such verse.

This purports to show the audience the cruelty of the possible punishments that he could inflict on Jade under Islamic culture. However, he then transitions to begin to teach Jade what it culturally means to be Muslim. He remarks to Jade, “What does it mean to be Muslim? To submit yourself to the will of God.”⁴⁷ In this way, Jade now knows that her cultural identity as a Muslim woman means to dedicate herself entirely to the will of God, and by extension, Ali’s expectation that she accept this new cultural and religious identity. This scene marks the beginning of Ali’s attempts to shape Jade’s personality, actions and attitudes into an accepted Islamic cultural product. Her struggles against the new Islamic cultural mold Ali is attempting to impose on her confirm the ongoing clash of Brazilian and Islamic culture within herself. This problem only worsens with the beginning of Jade’s love affair with the Brazilian boy who witnessed her exhibitionist behavior.

In the third episode of the show, the “Clash of Civilizations” is presented in another dynamic outside of Jade’s relationship with Ali. Here, Huntington’s ideas are discussed in what can only be described as a spirited debate between Ali and Albieri, a good friend of Ali’s who happens to be Lucas’ uncle. Initially, Albieri is seeking

⁴⁵ “Ibid.” (20:10)

⁴⁶ “Ibid.” (20:25)

⁴⁷ “Ibid.” (21:07)

reassurances that Jade suffered no mistreatment due to Lucas' actions. However, this discussion devolves into Albieri questioning the formation of Ali's religious beliefs and attitudes. The argument begins with Albieri remarking, "I don't understand how an educated man like yourself that has traveled behaves outlandishly here in Morocco."⁴⁸ In making this declaration, Albieri fundamentally questions the orientation of Ali's cultural and spiritual beliefs, implying that they simply do not reflect the experiences of enlightenment he should have had during his travels in the Western world.

Naturally, however, Ali has a different interpretation. He rebuts Albieri by simply stating, "Here, we still have values that you all in the West have thrown away a long time ago."⁴⁹ Despite this rebuttal, Albieri continues questioning the basis of Ali's beliefs, "How can you guide yourself with behavioral standards that were written in antiquity? We are in a new century, Ali."⁵⁰ The argument continues but the nature of Albieri's criticism has already been established. In claiming that Ali's belief system is based in the era of antiquity, Albieri implies that it is hopelessly incompatible with the modern era. This is significant because it suggests that Ali is unable to see that the values of the Western world better conform to modernity than those of Morocco. Albieri suggests that Ali's traditional Moroccan values are not normal in the modern world. It draws a direct connection to the conceived "normal" world that Ali has declined to enter.

In this episode, Ali uses his religious dogma to explain everyday life choices. In a discussion with Lucas, Ali references his religious belief in order to clarify Lucas' curiosity about the choice of decorations he has made in his home. Ali remarks to Lucas, "You noted there weren't any paintings right? Our religion prohibits drawing

⁴⁸ "El Clon Capítulo 3." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019 (14:20)

⁴⁹ "Ibid." (14:33)

⁵⁰ "Ibid." (14:40)

living things. We don't draw animals or plant life because they are living things and the only person that creates life is God. If we wanted to draw living things, we would be comparing ourselves to God."⁵¹ This description highlights the different cultural expectations regarding art that exist in Islam and the West. As someone who was born and raised in Brazil, Lucas maintained the expectation that there would be some type of paintings or artwork to decorate the walls of a typical house. However, Ali makes it clear that in Islamic culture, this type of decoration is absolutely forbidden.

The last dynamic of the "Clash of Civilizations" theory that is presented within the introductory episodes of *El Clon* shows not one, but two cultural divides that serve to successfully hamper the relationship between Jade and Lucas. After Lucas furtively sees Jade dancing, they eventually attempt to cultivate a hidden, secretive, and forbidden relationship in the hopes of getting married and being happy together. The third and fourth episodes of the show are where the passions of this relationship begin to run hot and where the cultural difficulties that will eventually serve to keep them apart appear. For example, when Jade and Lucas meet for the first time, Jade mentions the relative levels of inexperience that she has when it comes to relationships and physical love. When Lucas asks, "You've never touched a guy's hand? You've never kissed anyone?"⁵², Jade replies in the negative. Despite spending most of her earlier life in Brazil, her mother, acting on Muslim values, prevented her from experiencing the normal progression of affections that occurs among young Brazilian men and women. Even though Jade was immersed in Brazilian culture, her mother's insistence that she maintain her Muslim identity stifled any chance of having a boyfriend. Now that she is living in Morocco, her uncle has assumed her mother's role and now acts as another cultural

⁵¹ "Ibid." (16:50-17:04)

⁵² "Ibid." (22:11)

barrier that has been erected in her way, thereby preventing any chance of kissing a man, having or boyfriend or otherwise engaging in romance absent of marriage without consequence.

Jade's secretive relationship with Lucas also exposes the separation that she feels with her Moroccan family members, a feeling that is largely due to cultural differences. Despite being Arab, Jade's upbringing in Brazil has shaped her identity profoundly. She explains this to Lucas after he asks her about her mentality. "I don't think like that. I've lived all my life in Rio de Janeiro. My mentality is different."⁵³ This quote shows that Jade herself views Brazilian and Moroccan culture as two distinct identities. She sees herself as different from her relatives and doesn't believe that the difference between their belief systems can be bridged. This is in line with Huntington's worldview. The clash comes from two sources. Externally, it comes from characters such as her mother and uncle who tell her exactly what her cultural identity needs to be. Internally, she sees herself as different due to her exposure to Brazilian culture and customs through much of her life. This gives her the willingness to disregard Ali's dictums but fails to resolve the cultural clash she is experiencing.

Ali, however, demonstrates a profound understanding of the split nature of Jade's identity. While the pressures are primarily external, she also struggles internally with the cultural choices she has to make. Ali, in addition to acting as an external pressure to resolve Jade's clash of cultural identities, attempts to resolve her internal cultural ambiguities, acknowledging his understanding of the depth of the conflict she is experiencing. For Jade, a hybrid Brazilian identity seems normal but Ali believes she must make a firm choice. Additionally, Ali expresses a high level of confidence that his

⁵³ "El Clon Capítulo 4." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019 (14:16)

vision for how Jade should live her life is correct and that it will cure her of the cultural divide she is experiencing. This acknowledgment comes in the fourth episode. Ali arranges a marriage for Jade and she challenges him, remarking that she would rather go to school and that she won't marry anyone that she has never seen. However, Ali won't take no for an answer. He states, "Jade, you are very divided. You have the conscience of a Muslim woman and the desires of a Western woman. No one can be happy. No one can be happy following two paths. The marriage is going to protect you from yourself."⁵⁴ In this scene, Ali recognizes the difficulties that Jade faces regarding her split cultural identity but seems to overestimate how much she has internalized her Muslim identity. However, he dismisses any notion of being able to seriously maintain the status quo. When he declares that nobody is happy following two paths, this suggests that these two paths are inherently incompatible, and that a decision must be taken regarding which path to follow. Naturally, as the person responsible for Jade's welfare, Ali is going to guide her cultural upbringing in a manner faithful to that of his interpretation of Islam. Simply put, the continuation of both a Muslim conscience and Western desires is inconsistent with Islam and reflects Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory.

The first few episodes of the television show *El Clon* have depicted several characters attempting to resolve various issues of life that stem from cultural conflict. While these scenes largely have been represented in Jade's struggles to adapt to her life and her interactions with the various members of her family, this dynamic has also been represented by Lucas' furtive relationship with Jade and Albieri's discussion with Ali. The analysis offered of the first four episodes supports the contention that the ideas espoused in Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory are highly

⁵⁴ "Ibid." (24:55)

prominent in the introductory stages of the television program. However, a more complete chronological analysis is necessary to further lend support to the premise being advocated. To that end, I will now investigate selected middle episodes in order to advance these arguments.

The analysis of selected middle episodes will begin with episode twenty-five of the show. Naturally, with the passage of time in the chronology of the show, events have moved apace and the passage of time has advanced their lives from the introductory episodes. However, the first notable event in the twenty-fifth episode is that, Ali continues with his didactic nature in another heated debate with his good friend Albieri. This time, the argument deals with the ethics of cloning, and it serves to highlight the clashing cultural differences of Islam and the West regarding this ethical question. Ali begins by defining what he considers to be the strict limits and borders on the permissibility of the process, stating, “You all can experiment. You all can do it but not with human beings. A human being is not a guinea pig for experiments, Albieri.”⁵⁵ However, Albieri disagrees with this assessment and claims, “The world cannot advance without making sacrifices, Ali.”⁵⁶ Naturally, Ali offers a stinging rebuke of Albieri’s assessment. “The life of a human being is the most sacred. Religion, race, skin color isn’t important. Life is sacred. The day you fall into temptation, will you be able to look at yourself in the mirror?”⁵⁷ While the show’s plot has progressed significantly from the introductory episodes, the theme of cultural clash continues to remain front and center. Ali in this debate espouses the rigidity of his views, insisting that research on humans is spiritually inadmissible and forbidden. In contrast, Albieri seems to hold a view that is

⁵⁵ El Clon Capítulo 25." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019 (6:12)

⁵⁶ "Ibid." (6:20)

⁵⁷ "Ibid." (6:35)

more common in Western thought. His appeal to the common good and advancement of society is devoid of any religious connotation, and thereby any prohibition on human experimentation. This argument, while not being centered on religion, but rather morality, nevertheless shows a cultural clash over the morality of human cloning. These men's beliefs have been formed on the basis of their religious upbringing or lack thereof.

The theme of cultural clash also continues to be evident in the experiences of other characters in the show. In this scene, Jade's resentment at the cultural impositions forced upon her now become highly evident. In the progression of the show's plot, Ali's arranged marriage for her has come to fruition and she is now married to a man named Said. However, she is visibly irritated after learning of Lucas' impending marriage and immediately dismisses Soraide's attempts to assuage her negative outlook. She encourages Jade to "Have fun with your husband. It may be that you end up falling in love with him."⁵⁸ However, Jade immediately dismisses this idealistic notion and instead provides an extremely pessimistic assessment of herself as someone who has been culturally crushed by the weight of her uncontrollable fate. She remarks, "Soraide, I don't want to know anything about love. Cut that word out of my life. I no longer want to fall in love with anyone. Never again."⁵⁹ This quote epitomizes the immensely pessimistic outlook of someone whose spirit has been crushed. Jade no longer believes that true love is possible, due to her own arranged marriage. This shows to an extent that the free spirited, dancing Brazilian who arrived to Morocco has now disappeared. To some extent, Ali has succeeded in snuffing out the Brazilian culture she used to embody.

Jade's discontent continues to manifest as the show progresses. In the show's fifty-fifth episode, there are two scenes that demonstrate to the audience the true

⁵⁸ "Ibid." (23:50)

⁵⁹ "Ibid." (24:24)

unhappiness that she is experiencing. The first instance is at a party. Jade is with her husband Said and they are supposed to be celebrating a blessing that they have just received. Everyone in the room is dancing, with the exception of Jade. Soraide notices this and encourages Jade to “Go dance with your husband.”⁶⁰ However, Jade makes no move to do so. Instead, she just continues to sit where she is with a melancholy look on her face. Overall, the scene suggests a high level of dissatisfaction with her arranged marriage. Additionally, the weight of this scene takes on new meaning when soon after in the episode, the audience is treated to a direct juxtaposition of Jade’s life in comparison to that of Lucas’. Firstly, we see a pregnant Jade confined in a house, alone, and looking very unhappy. Afterward, the scene cuts to Lucas with his wife and kids, together outside of the house looking happy and free. This scene serves to suggest that Western culture has the potential to offer a happy life, while Islamic culture offers a miserable existence. It implies that if Jade had been more rebellious and had been more successful in navigating her own clash of cultures, she would have had a happier life.

The most intriguing part of this episode is that a character other than Jade protests against the cultural expectations that are meant to be a normal part of the way of life of an Islamic woman. In this scene, we see Nasira, an unmarried Muslim woman who is part of Mohammad’s household. Mohammad is married to Jade’s cousin Latifa. Since Nasira is unmarried, Mohammad suggests that she go to Fes in order to help Jade take care of her child. This idea does not make Nasira happy. She remarks, “I’m going to take charge? I’m going to pass the rest of my life taking care of their kids, too? No, no no. I’m not going to have time to live. Nasira’s day will never arrive. I was born to be the slave of

⁶⁰ El Clon Capítulo 55." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019

this family?”⁶¹ She shows remarkable resistance to Mohammad’s suggestion. Her insistence that she wants something more of her life contains a hint of Western sentiment to it. She is somewhat of a counterexample to what we have seen throughout the continuity of this show. Normally, male characters have been controlling women in accordance with their Islamic beliefs. For example, Jade was unable to maintain her Brazilian cultural identity, and that Nasira was able to successfully reject this idea, demonstrates the sentiment in the show that the grass is greener outside of Islamic culture.

As more time passes in the chronology of the show, Ali and Albieri continue to argue about the ethics of cloning. Albieri once again tries to convince Ali about the legitimacy of conducting research related to cloning. However, Ali maintains his previously expressed skepticisms, this time citing Greek mythology to support his viewpoint. Tellingly, he asks Albieri, “Where is the West going to stand, Albieri? Your God is science!”⁶² This time, instead of appealing to the common good of society, Albieri attempts to eliminate the perceived barriers between science and God. He claims, “There isn’t an incompatibility between science and God.”⁶³ He goes on to cite Friedrich Nietzsche, who he claims said, “God, having finished his work, put himself at the feet of science, and rested from weariness of being God.”⁶⁴ By using this source, Albieri attempts to intimately link science and religion together, thereby successfully countering Ali’s contention that the Western world is godless and faithless. However, Ali laughs off this attempt, stating that Nietzsche also said, “God is dead.”⁶⁵ This argument once again

⁶¹ “Ibid.” (30:36)

⁶² El Clon Capítulo 81." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019 (15:03)

⁶³ “Ibid.” (15:07)

⁶⁴ “Ibid.” (15:23)

⁶⁵ “Ibid.” (15:32)

demonstrates the cultural conflicts that exist between Ali and Albieri despite their friendship. Albieri's reference to the German philosopher Nietzsche further supports the notion of their cultural separation. Ali always justifies his opinions citing verses from the Koran, and would not pull information from other sources to back his belief systems.

The passing of time in the show also opens the opportunity for other characters to experience the same cultural clashes that Jade was experiencing in the earliest stages of the show. Samira, the daughter of Latifa, is someone who is denied the chance to wear the clothing she prefers, similarly to the way that Jade was reprimanded for her clothing choices in the introductory episodes of the television show. Samira is ultimately exposed to the same type of childhood as that of Jade, as her family moves to Brazil for Latifa's husband's work. Therefore, it only seems natural that Samira would want to push the boundaries of what her mother Latifa would consider acceptable clothing choices. In the scene, Samira is shown wearing a top that exposes a significant amount of her belly. Latifa is vehemently against her daughter wearing this type of clothing, saying "It's Haram, Samira. Haram."⁶⁶ However, Samira seizes upon what she sees as a loophole. She replies, "It's Haram in Morocco, it's not a sin in Brazil."⁶⁷

In this manner, Samira shows how the two incompatible cultures she has experienced in her life have influenced her. She understands that this type of clothing is not permissible in Morocco, but she believes that since she is living in Brazil and experiencing Brazilian culture, she is allowed to follow a different standard. Her mother Latifa swiftly puts an end to this argument, although not without enduring her daughter's protests. "It's Haram. It's a sin in whatever place in the world, Samira."⁶⁸ However,

⁶⁶ "Ibid." (21:48)

⁶⁷ "Ibid." (21:50)

⁶⁸ "Ibid." (21:53)

Samira's reply shows the difficulty she is experiencing, struggling to balance two distinct, contradictory cultural identities, just like Jade. "Mama. I don't want to be different from the whole world. All of my friends have tops and I don't have one."⁶⁹ What this scene really shows is the isolation she is experiencing in a Western cultural environment that she cannot truly experience due to her family's own beliefs that don't properly mesh with the environment in which they are living.

In the concluding episodes, I will provide the final link in establishing the continuity of the theme of the "Clash of Civilizations" present in the show. I will depict these same themes occurring among the different principal characters in the final five episodes, excluding the 248th. In the final portion of the show's analysis, I will analyze these themes in order to prove their final continuity with the other episodes already discussed in addition to offering some concluding thoughts regarding the show's depiction of these themes.

With the passage of yet more time, it appears that Samira continues to struggle to comport herself well and find her identity in the environment in which she is growing up. However, this time the struggle manifests itself in the two hundred and forty-fifth episode, with Samira's disappearance. The argument that ensues among the members of her family regarding her disappearance results in Nasira blaming Mohammad's heavy-handed Islamic cultural values. She states, "Look what happens when you write on top of the writings of Allah. You all made Samira disappear."⁷⁰ She suggests that Mohammad's attempts to go above what Allah dictates in controlling his daughter have made her disappear. In this manner, we see Nasira once again criticizing

⁶⁹ "Ibid." (22:02)

⁷⁰ "El Clon Capítulo 245." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019 (2:25)

the cultural practices and beliefs of Mohammad, suggesting that she herself has more Western orientation. However, her concluding comment is much like the religious dictums that Ali often gave in the introductory and middle episode scenes of the show. “If she doesn’t appear, it will be your fault Mohammad. Allah will make you pay for it on your Judgment Day.”⁷¹ This scene is indicative of two elements. First, Samira’s continued intransigence suggests Mohammad’s attempts to raise her in the Islamic tradition have not been successful, due to their clash with their Brazilian environment. Second, Nasira seems to continue showing distaste for the Islamic cultural traditions of the family, but interestingly enough pivots back to the religious scripture in saying that Allah will make Mohammad pay in the end. In this manner, it seems that Nasira’s own cultural beliefs systems are also split between Islam and the West.

Samira’s rebellious behavior continues. However, her life begins to take on a dynamic that parallels that of Jade’s. Eventually, Mohammad learns where his daughter disappeared. He talks with a young man named Roberto and is astounded to learn that he is Samira’s boyfriend. He assures Mohammad that Samira is well and living in the house of a friend from their high school. He then tells Mohammad a stunning piece of information. He states, “I will convert because I love Samira.”⁷² Both the similarities and differences between Jade’s love affair and Samira’s are striking. On the one hand, both Samira and Jade have now found themselves engaged in romantic encounters with non-Muslim men. In both relationships, there exists a stark cultural divide that threatens to ultimately end their respective romances. However, it is Roberto’s move to preempt the inevitable cultural clashes that ultimately contrasts his moves from those of Lucas. He intends to bridge the cultural divide and the cultural conflicts that may arise. The show

⁷¹ “Ibid.” (2:31)

⁷² “Ibid.” (5:42)

could be suggesting that the only way for intercultural relationships to work is for Westerners to convert to Islam. Alternatively, the show might be suggesting the “Clash of Civilizations” theory only serves to alienate those who love each other, and therefore, that one must move beyond it. However, Mohammad is so surprised by this turn of events that he faints. He is surprised that Roberto would go to this extreme for his daughter but the fact that he is willing to do so neither reassures him nor completely eliminates the clash in his eyes.

Mohammad’s fainting after learning about his daughter precipitates a reaction afterward that is parallel to that of Ali’s reactions to Jade’s various misdeeds in the introductory and middle episodes. He talks about the various things that he is going to do to his daughter in order to punish her for the transgressions that she has committed. He ignores his wife Latifa’s calls for patience with his daughter. Instead he declares, “Latifa, I will cut out her eyes. I will skin her.”⁷³ Mohammad seems to be very angry, and he continues espousing rhetoric about what he is going to do. “I will take Samira and I will drag her by the hair through the city.”⁷⁴ The cruelty of the potential punishments that Mohammad could inflict is reminiscent of the types of punishments Ali listed to Jade as permissible under the teachings of the Koran. In this manner, Samira’s acting outside of her culture continues the parallel plot events that Jade experienced and further supports the struggles with clashing cultural influences that affect their identities. When Samira enters the room, the look of complete fear on her face demonstrates she knows all too well the potential consequences of the actions that she has taken.

Samira continues to be a source of conflict for the principal characters of the show in the concluding episodes. In the two hundred and forty sixth episode, Latifa

⁷³ “Ibid.” (16:11-16:20)

⁷⁴ “Ibid.” (16:20)

and Mohammad resume their attempts to convince Samira that the feelings she maintains for her non-Muslim boyfriend are not genuine and try to change her character. Mohammad accuses Samira of being as troublesome to him as Jade was said to Ali. He says, "Accept that Samira needs to learn more about religion and think about how exhibitionist women do not wear the veil."⁷⁵ Naturally, this provokes a storm of protests from Samira, who vehemently disagrees with the premise of the accusation. However, more important to this scene is how Mohammad equates Samira's behaviors to that of Jade's. He is using this parallel comparison in order to influence Samira into following the course of Jade, who eventually married and followed the wishes of her uncle Ali.

Nevertheless, the cultural clash being depicted here as a continuation of Jade's own cultural clashes albeit in the next generation of characters presents an interesting viewpoint to the show's viewers. The implication is that these same cultural clashes continue from one generation to the next. The same problems that Jade faces are now being confronted by her cousin Latifa's daughter, a member of a new generation. Additionally, Mohammad and Latifa say, "love is born out of cohabitation."⁷⁶ This belief is inherently born out of their Islamic religious belief, and Samira, like Jade in her own discussion about love, rejects the claim strongly. The scene overall demonstrates that same unquestioned incompatibility of some characters in the show who cannot accept family members who do not share their same cultural beliefs. At this moment, it does not seem to matter that Samira's presumed boyfriend Roberto claimed he would convert to Islam.

⁷⁵ "El Clon Capítulo 246." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019

⁷⁶ "Ibid." (28:30).

The next episode of the show presents a significant twist in the relationship between Samira and Roberto that contrasts significantly from the failed relationship between Jade and Lucas. Initially, Roberto had claimed that he was going to convert to Islam. In this episode, we see the realization of his dramatic statement. The viewer sees yet another scene where Mohammad and Samira are quarreling about her boyfriend Roberto. However, they are suddenly interrupted when Roberto bursts into the room to inform them he has been with the Sheikh and he has officially completed his conversion to Islam. He remarks to Mohammad, Latifa and Samira that “I was with the Sheikh like you all told me. The Sheikh has converted me and he sent me here to show you the Koran.”⁷⁷

This conversion has important ramifications for the general theme of the “Clash of Civilizations” that has been repeatedly portrayed in the totality of the show. It presents a new dynamic for how the show attempts to resolve what had previously been depicted as an impossibility of love between two people of different cultures. However, Roberto has taken the extreme step of leaving his culture behind in order to adopt Samira’s and make their relationship a genuine possibility. There are two implications for the continued development of their relationship. Will the members of Samira’s family accept Roberto’s conversion into their culture and allow their relationship to continue? Additionally, if the relationship does succeed, what message does the show ultimately send about the cultural compatibility of Islam and the West if a character had to convert to Islam to ultimately succeed? There is an immediate indication about the potential for success of Samira and Roberto’s relationship. Ali now visiting Brazil learns about Roberto’s conversion and makes a comment that casts an element of favorability to

⁷⁷ El Clon Capítulo 247." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019 (33:23)

Roberto's actions. Ali remarks, "We cannot deny anyone the teachings of religion. It's forbidden."⁷⁸ With this statement, he seems to welcome Roberto into their culture. Additionally, his change in attitude is highly significant because it removes a major potential roadblock for the blossoming of the relationship, considering he is the major force that denies Jade the chance to be with Lucas.

However, there is one more scene to analyze before the concluding scene that casts doubt about the acceptance of Samira and Roberto's relationship, in addition to furthering reinforcing the "Clash of Civilizations" theme. Mohammad expresses his frustrations with the cultural values that are present in Brazil. He is talking to guests at a party he is having and remarks, "I am very happy to be living in Brazil but the only thing that disgusts me is that it's very difficult to raise our kids inside of the customs. You understand me?"⁷⁹ This shows his continued frustration in making sure his children are culturally Muslim while living in Brazil.

To conclude the analysis of the later portion of episodes, a discussion of the concluding scene of the show is needed. This ending scene consists of narration from Ali about the respective fates of all of the relevant and important characters in the show. We learn about the fate of Samira and Roberto's relationship in addition to the fates of other major characters, such as Jade. To start, we learn from Ali's statement that "Mohammad was made more tolerant, and he admits that Roberto will be a good Muslim for Samira."⁸⁰ As a result, we understand that Roberto's efforts to convert ultimately gained Mohammad's acceptance. However, we also learn from Ali's statement that "I

⁷⁸ "Ibid." (33:33)

⁷⁹ El Clon Capítulo 249." Video file. Youtube. Posted by EsTefa, August 5, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019 (28:30)

⁸⁰ El Clon Capítulo 250." Video file. Dailymotion. Posted by Latino El Clon, 2018. Accessed December 3, 2019

pardoned Jade. Jade and Lucas are happy.”⁸¹ The series even closes with a scene of Jade and Lucas running toward each other in the Moroccan desert in a dramatic fashion. While this might seem to be a nonsensical or overly rapid ending, the show suddenly ends this way. Despite the repeated portrayals of these relationships as impossible due to cultural clashes, the show’s creator manages to bring the respective lovers together anyway. What does this conclusion of the two major relationships suggest about the cultural differences that affected their respective relationships? Roberto converted to Islam and was able to win the approval of Samira’s father whereas Jade and Lucas anguished over each other for more than a decade, experiencing marriage with other partners and having children with them. Overall, the major delay in Jade and Lucas finally being together suggests that unless the Westerner is willing to convert to Islam, the cultural barriers experienced will ultimately prevent relationships from being successful. While Lucas ultimately did not have to convert and was able to finally be together with Jade due to the sheer power of true love and their status as seasoned and stubborn adults, this may reflect an underlying theme in Brazil that love is more important than cultural tradition. Roberto’s experience with Samira lends credence to the idea that their relationship would have been more feasible early on if he had declared his willingness to convert to Islam.

The analysis of the show’s introductory, middle, and concluding episodes shows the continued presence of ideology and belief systems consistent with Huntington’s contentions regarding the “Clash of Civilizations” between the West and Islam. These cultural conflicts have been shown to manifest in Jade’s relationship with Lucas throughout almost the entirety of the show, Ali and Albieri’s spirited debates about the ethical nature of cloning, Samira’s relationship with Roberto and through other

⁸¹ “Ibid.” (46:33)

individual comments made by other main characters. Ultimately, the issues raised by these characters are not resolved in any way that eliminates the cultural differences repeatedly portrayed. Instead, some characters are obligated to convert to Islam or endure years apart before being able to follow their hearts. Overall, the show suggests that the ability to make intercultural relationships work and overcoming the “Clash of Civilizations” is astoundingly difficult.

Chapter 4: Stakeholder Analysis

Now that various, important scenes have been discussed in *El Clon*, it is essential to now pivot to a different aspect of analysis. Due to the show's immense popularity in Latin America and even around the world, it will be useful to conduct an extensive analysis of audience reception of two different stakeholder groups through discussion of secondary analysis sources. First, I will examine among Arab stakeholders in both Brazil and Morocco, reactions to general audience inquiries about portrayed Islamic customs in selected scenes. This will establish what Arab stakeholders thought about the accuracy of the Islamic culture being portrayed in the show, being that Middle Eastern culture supplanted cloning as the main theme explored throughout the duration of *El Clon*. In a relatively short study primarily focused on textual analysis, there wasn't enough space to focus beyond Arab stakeholders. Second, I will examine general audience reactions through discussion of *El Clon* fan forums.

To begin with, the show's immediate debut caused an immediate negative, reaction among the Muslim community within Rio de Janeiro. According to Silvia Montenegro in her article, "The Fictional Representation of Islamism: Mass Media and Representation of Ethno-Religious Identities," the Muslim community took immediate steps to distance themselves from the all aspects of the show. To begin, she states that after the debut of the show, the Muslim community⁸² in the city immediately "removed themselves from the show's advisory capacity."⁸³ This shows that whatever feedback

⁸² Due to my inability to rely on primary source interviews, I focus on Montenegro's research on the opinions of Arab stakeholders. Unfortunately, she doesn't specifically state who she talked with in the Muslim community, other than Sheik Jihad H, who appeared to be one of the few individuals that decided to continue advising Perez and thus is not discussed in this paper. However, Montenegro does note that Gloria Perez spoke with the president of the Muslim community of Rio in addition to the World Assembly of Muslim Youth in order to seek advice before the show began airing.

⁸³ Silvia M. Montenegro (2005). El abordaje ficcional del Islamismo: medios masivos de comunicación y representación de identidades étnicoreligiosas. X Jornadas Interescuelas/Departamentos de Historia. Escuela

they had been giving to help make the sure the show was culturally accurate was not being followed. She elaborates, “The first episodes indicated to them that Islam would not be transmitted well.”⁸⁴ Montenegro then gives an example of all of Jade’s transgressions that, in the eyes of the Muslim community of Rio, are not accurately portrayed religious customs because these practices are nowhere near as prevalent as suggested. These include when “Jade danced sensually with her cousins, she slipped away to meet Lucas in the ruins of the city, and she had sexual relations without being married and after being engaged to another man.”⁸⁵ Although they were not part of the scenes analyzed in this paper, Montenegro also mentions the presence of scenes that have to do with virginity tests. She notes that, “during the series and different episodes the case of virginity tests was presented, suggesting that such a test is practice of Muslim culture.”⁸⁶ This suggestion is reinforced by one of the main protagonists, Jade, “appearing worried while she waits for her exam after finding out that she can be punished due to the results.”⁸⁷ This portrayal simply has little basis in reality. Despite the show purporting to spend a significant amount of time tackling subjects relating to Jade’s adjustment to the Muslim culture of Morocco, the Muslim community of Rio immediately stepped back from their association with the platform partly due to the show’s faux representations of Jade, but more importantly, they did not like the overall representations of Islam portrayed in the show.

de Historia de la Facultad de Humanidades y Artes, Universidad Nacional del Rosario. Departamento de Historia de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación, Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Rosario (6)

⁸⁴ “Ibid.” (6)

⁸⁵ “Ibid.” (6-7)

⁸⁶ “Ibid.” (7)

⁸⁷ “Ibid.” (7)

Not only did the show fail to represent Islam correctly, but Brazilian and other media outlets misrepresented the reactions of the Muslim community to ordinary Brazilians and Latin Americans. Montenegro also discusses this subject in her paper. She claims that, “print media practically didn’t represent the critical positions that were being expressed in the media and internal newsletters among some Muslim organizations.”⁸⁸ Instead, print media tended to only publish brief details about the reception of the show among the Muslim community, emphasizing only the positive reactions. These actions only underscore the challenges that the Brazilian Muslim community faced in trying to combat what would be widespread misconceptions about their way of life and Islam. She cites one Brazilian Muslim woman who remarks about the challenges in this way: “We have a great advantage: the fact that the faith of our religion is being shown in the houses of all Brazilians. But we have the disadvantage that, like all telenovelas, it deals with a fantasy, things that do not correspond to reality.”⁸⁹ She continues to provide an example that is consistent with one of the scenes analyzed previously. She references a scene where Ali slaps Jade and remarks that, “I believe a religious person would never have this type of attitude.”⁹⁰ This repudiation of Ali’s behavior suggests a major distortion of how Jade’s life would have changed in a real life situation. Consequently, one might begin to understand why the Brazilian Muslim community could feel largely dismayed by the content and creative decisions being made by the show’s production team largely from the moment of its debut.

The World Assembly of Muslim Youth, an international Islamic educational organization, also made important commentaries regarding the content of *El*

⁸⁸ “Ibid.” (8)

⁸⁹ “Ibid.” (9)

⁹⁰ “Ibid.” (9)

Clon. According to their website, they count among their goals the mission to “Introduce Islam to non-Muslims in its purist form and as a comprehensive system and way of life”, in addition to “Establishing a relationship of dialogue, understanding, and appreciation between Muslim organizations and other societies.”⁹¹ When the World Assembly of Muslim Youth saw the amount of misinformation that was being propagated on *El Clon*, they moved to take action. Per Montenegro, this organization “created a document located on the home page of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth. In that document, they intended to clarify some of the conflicting points about religious questions present in the series.”⁹² This allowed them to offer some official rebuttals to the inaccurate portrayals already mentioned. In particular, this organization centered their criticism and rebuttals on the representation of the role of women in Islam. They also offered statistics about conversion rates to Islam. The organization noted that in Brazil, “7 of every 10 converts are women. If Islam were repressive, why would women convert? We feel that certain subjects depicted in the show demonstrate a total lack of understanding of religion.”⁹³ In short, the content of *El Clon* has been criticized as inaccurate both by the Brazilian Muslim community and by international organizations like WAMY that are dedicated to educating about the true tenets of Islam.

Reactions of dismay to the content of *El Clon* came not only from ordinary members of the Brazilian Muslim community, but also from more high-level official sources. As the show continued to gain more popularity in Brazil, Latin-America

⁹¹ “World Assembly of Muslim Youth.” WAMY, The Web Company, 2018, www.wamy.co.za/about.html.

⁹² Silvia M. Montenegro (2005). El abordaje ficcional del Islamismo: medios masivos de comunicación y representación de identidades étnicoreligiosas. X Jornadas Interescuelas/Departamentos de Historia. Escuela de Historia de la Facultad de Humanidades y Artes, Universidad Nacional del Rosario. Departamento de Historia de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación, Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Rosario (11)

⁹³ “Ibid.” (11)

and around the world, the Moroccan Ambassador to Brazil, a gentleman by the name of Abdelmalek Cherkaoui Ghazouani offered several different criticisms of the show on the bulletin board of the embassy website. He claimed that despite high amounts of Brazilian enthusiasm regarding the content of the show, “the novela turned out to be a huge farce, portraying mediocre images, and a sham of the Arab-Muslim culture and reality.”⁹⁴ The ambassador then provided numerous examples to support his criticism regarding the themes portrayed on the show. To begin, Ambassador Ghazouani focused on polygamy. In the show, several main characters are shown to have multiple wives. However, Ghazouani declared that despite this being portrayed as “a normal practice, accepted by all, mainly by the women, but in reality it is almost extinct and without any strength inside Moroccan society.”⁹⁵ This is significant because it is a hugely misleading depiction of daily life in Morocco. Next, Ghazouani took aim at the show’s portrayal of the role of women in public life. He states, “according to the novella, their universe is limited to the husband and belly dancing,” but this is “divergent to the reality of the Arab world and Morocco in particular, where 43% of university students are females.”⁹⁶ This means that the show has failed to depict Moroccan women’s hugely important role in their society. Another particularly important criticism has to do with belly dancing. In the early stages of the show, Jade in particular is criticized for her exhibitionist belly dancing, but the ambassador’s commentary suggests the likelihood of such a thing happening in reality is quite remote. He stated that belly dancing “has never been part of the Moroccan cultural heritage. The dance is presented only in touristy places and nightclubs, the same as in

⁹⁴ Barbosa, Elizabeth, "The Brazilian Telenovela "El Clon": An Analysis of Viewers' Online Vicarious and Virtual Learning Experiences"

(2005). Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios and Projects. 286. (96)

⁹⁵ “Ibid.” (96)

⁹⁶ “Ibid.” (96)

Brazil.”⁹⁷ Due to the show’s continued and repeated depictions of belly dancing, the audience’s perception of Morocco is only further distorted.

Lastly, Ambassador Ghouzani clarifies that the show’s depiction of Uncle Ali as the person solely responsible for the children’s education and overall welfare is entirely false. In fact, he states, “Women have a major role in the Moroccan family, they are responsible for the children’s education and the welfare of the family and they are the only ones to have this job.”⁹⁸ With these four critiques, Ambassador Ghouzani’s criticisms open a big gap between the various aspects of Moroccan culture depicted in the show and the reality in real life. With these major inaccuracies, it would not be surprising for a Brazilian who had watched the entirety of *El Clon* to travel on vacation to Morocco and be completely befuddled by what he sees.

Up until this point, the focus of the audience reception analysis has been centered in Muslim organizations like WAMY, the World Assembly for Muslim Youth, certain Moroccan government officials, or common Brazilian Muslims living in Rio de Janeiro. Now, I will begin a discussion of the common viewer’s experience watching *El Clon* will be conducted in order to better understand the audience’s reaction to certain scenes where the theme of “Clash of Civilizations” has been presented. In order to do so, I will cite certain posts drawn from Elizabeth Barbosa’s work, “The Brazilian Telenovela, *El Clon*, An Analysis of Viewers’ Online Vicarious and Virtual Learning Experiences.”⁹⁹ In the paper, she examines the online worldwide fan discussion boards of *El Clon* in order to better understand the direction of the conversations. Most of these scenes

⁹⁷ “Ibid.” (96)

⁹⁸ “Ibid.” (96)

⁹⁹ Barbosa, Elizabeth, “The Brazilian Telenovela ‘El Clon’: An Analysis of Viewers’ Online Vicarious and Virtual Learning Experiences” (2005). *Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios and Projects*. 286. <https://spiral.lynn.edu/etds/286>

discussed here will have to do with the depictions of Islam in the show. Since these fan forums are no longer available online, I was unable to conduct an original analysis of these posts.

The first instance that deserves discussion has to do with the audiences' reaction to the continuous scenes of dancing that occur within the telenovela. In this case, they are referring to a scene of a pregnant Latifa and others dancing in Ali's house. Barbosa cites a commenter on the fan forum who states, "Do you think people of the Muslim faith appear offended by some of the things that are shown about the lifestyle? Last night it appeared that the people at Tio Ali's house spent all of their time playing music, singing and dancing throughout Latifa's pregnancy. I know this a wonderfully happy occasion for the couple but I think this is strictly from Gloria Perez's imagination. Beautiful but unreal."¹⁰⁰ This post shows that the some audience discussion centered on the disproportionate amount of dancing scenes in *El Clon* and questioned whether this characteristic is truly emblematic of Islam. However, this might not be for the same reasons as those of a Muslim. A reply to the above post cited offers this opinion. "I don't know about Muslim people, but this was too much for me. Pregnant women don't dance all the time, not even a few times."¹⁰¹ Overall, these commenters rightly agree that the portrayal of dancing on the show is embellished and harbor logical doubts about its accuracy in real life.

Common audience members in their viewing also question the portrayal of practices that purport to be Islamic cultural rituals. This post discusses the rituals of the Muslim wedding night. This poster asks about the depicted practice of waiting outside to see the bloody sheets and expresses her strong disapproval of the practice if true. They

¹⁰⁰ "Ibid." (162-163)

¹⁰¹ "Ibid." (163)

state, “A question about the Muslim wedding night: is everyone really waiting outside the door to see the bloody sheets? I still think it’s pathetic that they expect women to bleed all over the sheets.”¹⁰² There is the small undercurrent of outrage towards this depiction and the treatment of women. Additionally, this person was not the only one expressing doubts. A reply to this post similarly questioned the authenticity of this portrayal. “I was wondering the same thing. Are they overdramatizing the whole situation with the bloody sheet or is this true to life?”¹⁰³ At this point, these comments have shown a consistent incredulity to the portrayals having to do with Muslim wedding nights. It is at this point another reply to the original posts comes from a Muslim who disavows the legitimacy of this practice and claims that in actuality, it rarely happens as depicted. They state, “As a Muslim, I can assure you this pathetic display of waiting for bleeding is not a requirement or part of religion... There are some close-minded people that do this or make it part of Muslim wedding rituals. It is more of a cultural thing than Muslim.”¹⁰⁴ This continues the pattern of audience members questioning the depictions in the show even if they do not have any background in Islam.

The last post that will be discussed again turns to the topic of women’s rights and attempts to make an overall clarification regarding what women are allowed to do under the Islamic religion. Specifically, the post focuses on marriage rules as they are applied to women. “I am Moroccan and Muslim and I want you to know a lot of stuff is done wrong. Muslim women have a lot more rights than *El Clon* shows. A woman cannot be forced to marry. It is haram! (forbidden) A woman has her rights and property under Islam. A man can’t remarry whenever he feels like it!”¹⁰⁵ The post continues and refutes

¹⁰² “Ibid.” (105)

¹⁰³ “Ibid.” (105)

¹⁰⁴ “Ibid.” (105)

¹⁰⁵ “Ibid.” (107)

several more items that are incorrectly portrayed in the show. The post concludes, “They overdid things and made stuff up just to fit the story and I felt insulted being Moroccan and Muslim.”¹⁰⁶ In this instance, we see a Muslim actually entering an online fan forum for *El Clon* and preemptively posting something in order to clarify what she believes is completely culturally wrong. Overall, despite the show’s high popularity, there appears to be a tendency for the audience to question some of the more culturally significant scenes portraying Islam.

The examination of various different groups of the audience groups that are watching and discussing *El Clon* demonstrate that show is not completely culturally accurate and viewers largely reached the same conclusion. Fans on the forum largely expressed skepticisms about the “Clash of Civilizations” elements portrayed on the show. The fact that the Muslim community of Rio declined to further advise the show immediately after its onset reveals its members’ immediate disillusionment with the creative choices being made by the production team. Furthermore, the fact that international Muslim organizations, Moroccan ambassadors and ordinary Brazilian members of the Rio Community have all taken certain umbrage does not bode well for the portrayals of Islamic culture present within many aspects of the show’s plot. Even non-Muslim viewers of the show discussed these cultural portrayals on fan forums and expressed skepticism and even disgust at some of the practices depicted. These attributes grouped in aggregate imply that the majority of the “Clash of Civilizations” events that occur within the show have little basis in reality.

¹⁰⁶ “Ibid.” (108)

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Throughout the entirety of this paper, Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory has been invoked. An introduction to the basic tenets of his belief was introduced along with academic rebuttals of his ideas from a group of experts, each centered within different academic disciplines. All of these individuals resoundingly rejected the arguments made by Huntington and considered them flawed. Their rejections demonstrate the high level of pushback his ideas received in the academic world.

The analysis of the selected episodes within *El Clon* has shown imagery, themes, and conflicts consistent with the ideas expressed within Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations." Whether it be Jade's struggles to adapt to her new home in Morocco after living the majority of her life in Brazil, Ali and Albieri's ethical debates about the acceptability of cloning humans or Samira's own attempts to reconcile her family's cultural and religious expectations with her own desire to integrate into mainstream Brazilian culture, the major characters time and time again confront choices that have to do with the oppositional nature of Western and Islamic culture as portrayed within the show. Throughout these conflicts, these characters are forced to make choices that take them down one cultural path while abandoning the other. Jade is denied the ability to marry Lucas and instead is forced to marry a suitor Uncle Ali chooses for her. Ali and Albieri fail to find a middle ground regarding cloning. Samira's boyfriend Roberto converts to Islam in order to better ensure the success of their relationship; and even then, Samira's father Mohammad continues to struggle and push back against their relationship for a time. While the show depicts a happy ending for all of the principal characters, it fails to resolve the cultural conflicts in any way other than implying the necessity of complete commitment to only one of the two cultures, without any

possibility of incorporating the two into a single hybrid identity. If Uncle Ali was so resolute in requiring that Jade marry a pious Moroccan Muslim, it strains credulity he would be more accepting of Roberto without resolving the underlying cultural differences. Why does he not exert the same control over Samira and dictate her choices along with her father Mohammad? Overall, the cultural depictions presented seem to be resolved all too quickly in order to cleanly end the show. Ultimately, the way the story ended seemed to reflect a naïve inconsistency, suggesting that the creators and directors lacked awareness of the actual complexities. Much like the basic nature of Huntington's theory, *El Clon* creator Gloria Perez shaped her depictions in order to fit her own biases.

The reception of these portrayals was largely negative among Muslim audiences watching the television program. Muslims in Brazil and Morocco largely denounced the creative choices made through the show's development, while the World Assembly of Muslim Youth put rebuttals to the portrayals on the front page of their website. The Moroccan ambassador to Brazil posted scathing rebukes of various elements of the show, claiming they are entirely inconsistent with actual Moroccan culture and way of life. Meanwhile, non-Muslim audiences largely expressed bewilderment, sought clarification, and sometimes communicated disgust about portrayed Muslim cultural practices to other diehard viewers of the show on the *El Clon* telenovela-world forum. The show's seeming reflection of the "Clash of Civilizations" suggests that this portrayal could have led to negative perceptions of Islam among Latin American populations. Nonetheless, this paper's analysis offers a further contribution to other studies that have discussed the portrayal of Muslims in Western television shows, adding to a growing body of research regarding depictions of Muslim groups and culture in Latin America within the entertainment industry.

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